

VA**U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs**

News Release

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Washington, D.C. -- Twenty-six public and private nonprofit groups will receive awards from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), under its Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program, to develop new programs to assist homeless veterans.

" 'A place to call home' sounds like a simple phrase. But that phrase has meaning beyond imagining for the 250,000 veterans without a home -- about one-third of the adult homeless population living on the streets or in shelters on any given night," said Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Hershel Gober. "I congratulate this new group of grantees who will be working hard to provide safe, clean housing with high-quality services for veterans needing assistance."

Awardees from 23 cities and the District of Columbia will receive grants totaling about \$5 million and ranging from \$30,000 to \$487,000. The grants will supplement up to 65 percent of the cost of acquiring or renovating facilities that will be used for supportive housing or service centers. Ninety-five organizations applied for this year's VA grants.

Noting there are currently more than 800 beds available for homeless veterans, Gober said, "When these new projects are completed, approximately 2,500 community-based beds will be available."

With this new round of grants, VA has assisted 127 public and private nonprofit grant recipients in 39 states and the District of Columbia, with new recipients in three more states (North Carolina, Utah and Virginia) .

VA, which has directed more than \$96 million to its specialized homeless assistance programs in fiscal year 1998, is the only federal agency providing substantial hands-on assistance directly to homeless persons. In addition to the grant and per diem program, the department administers specialized homeless assistance programs, including establishing health care and rehabilitation programs for homeless veterans and conducting greater outreach to provide benefits counseling and referrals to other VA programs.

Information on the program is available on VA's home page, which can be reached through the Internet at <http://www.va.gov/health/homeless/index.htm>.